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FM AMEMBASSY ASMARA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9298  
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1531  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1709  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0670  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEPADJ/CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ  
RUMICEA/JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

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LONDON, PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

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TAGS: PGOV KPKO ER

SUBJECT: NO GSE RESPONSE YET TO EEBC DECISION

Classified By: AMB Ron K. McMullen, for reasons 1.4 (b)  
and (d).

¶1. (C) The Government of the State of Eritrea (GSE) has yet to respond officially to the November 30th statement of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Border Commission (EEBC). Many Eritreans anticipated the EEBC would provide much-awaited answers to the ongoing uncertainty about the border and expected that the GSE would have an official response. The GSE official media outlets have run no editorials or articles on the EEBC decision.

¶2. (C) In contrast to the GSE's silence, the country's sole political party, the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), has conducted meetings throughout the country reiterating anti-American and anti-Ethiopian rhetoric. In these community meetings, reported septel, PFDJ leaders Hagos Ghebrehiwet, Head of Economic Affairs, and Yemane Ghebreab, Head of Political Affairs, have repeatedly claimed that the U.S. continues to be Eritrea's primary enemy and, despite the arrival of a new U.S. Ambassador, Eritreans should not hope that the bilateral relationship will improve. One attendee told Poloff that Ghebrehiwet explained to the audience that while the Ambassador may be new, he still represents the same government and the same policies.

¶3. (C) Simultaneously, the GSE continues to arrest and detain young people of national service age, predominantly men between the ages of 18-40. RSO observed GSE officials, mostly police, mid-Sunday morning manning checkpoints and detaining individuals. At one checkpoint he counted nearly 30 young men being held.

¶4. (C) Comment: The PFDJ's latest public propaganda campaign highlighting purported threats to Eritrea's national security may be designed to maintain GSE control of the population while lowering expectations of immediate improvements in the political climate in the wake of the EEBC ruling. Potentially, a less tense security situation could foment instability because of heightened expectations of many long-suffering Eritreans. End Comment.

MCMULLEN